

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please replace the text in the abstract beginning on page 66, line 1 with the following rewritten text:

A thermal annealing process for producing a low defect density single crystal silicon wafer. The process includes thermally annealing a wafer having a first axially symmetric region which extends radially inwardly from the circumferential edge, contains silicon self-interstitials as the predominant intrinsic point defect and is substantially free of agglomerated interstitial defects and a second axially symmetric region which has vacancies as the predominant intrinsic point defect. The wafer is subjected to a thermal anneal at a temperature in excess of about 1000°C in an atmosphere of hydrogen, argon or a mixture thereof to dissolve agglomerated vacancy defects present in the second axially symmetric region within a layer extending from the front side toward the central plane.